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The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 269. DECEMBER, 1929.

TRUTH — LIBERTY — RELIGION.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"
—I Cor. 3 : 16.

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Editorial.

Ulster Hall United Service.

The annual service for all our congregations in the Ulster Hall was the usual success. Most of our congregations were represented but we cannot say **well represented,** from the numerical point of view. When one considers that there are, according to the latest statistics, nearly three thousand worshippers definitely connected with the Non-Subscribing Church of Ireland (nearly enough to fill the hall twice over) one is disappointed to see even one vacant seat, and there was more than one vacant seat on Sunday evening, November 17th. There are evidently many "finished" Non-Subscribers in Ireland as well as "finished" Unitarians in England. Again there are about thirty Ministers of the Irish Non-Subscribing Church, each of whom was asked to be on the platform, but only about one third responded. Surely we can do better than this?

A Successful Gathering.

Having had our grumble (not altogether uncalled for, we suggest) we may say that the gathering was slightly larger than last year and the whole service was most inspiring. The singing of the hymns, which was good and hearty the reading of the lessons by the Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A., who could be distinctly heard (a compliment we cannot always pay to speakers in the Ulster Hall) and the singing of the quartette, a-sermon in itself, created the right atmosphere for Mr. Hall's excellent address. The best tribute we can pay to the address of the Rev. Alfred Hall, M.A., B.D., is to ask our readers not only to read it, but to re-read it. Mr. Hall's views (which appear on another page) are not only instructive but are suggestive of new lines of theological thought which prevent us from unconsciously "measuring God with a Foot-rule."

Publicity.

The speaker said much that was worth saying and yet so little of it, comparatively speaking, appeared in the local press. Cannot something be done to alter this? It is galling to find the stereotyped utterances of some cock-sure evangelical fanatic occupying more space that the carefully considered and well thought out remarks of some of our own admittedly able leaders of the Liberal Christian Faith. We should not undervalue press publicity. Publicity for its own sake is most undesirable, publicity for the sake of the cause but which is so dear to us, is a different matter altogether. We suggest that the speakers at future gatherings of a similar nature, be asked to furnish in advance a summary of the address and that a type-written copy be either sent direct to the newspapers or handed to the reporters present at the meeting. This would certainly mean more press space devoted to our cause and what is equally important, the fundamentals of our faith and not the arbitrary selections of the reporters, would reach the outside public. Surely our speakers and not the reporters, no matter how able and conscientious, are the best judges of the fundamentals of our Faith? It is high time this important matter received the attention it deserves.

Our Constitution.

After considerable discussion, the meeting of the Association of the Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterians and other Free Christians (held on 19th November), called specially to consider the Constitution of our Church, decided not to take any action regarding the matter. Any other course would have been ill-advised considering the feeling of the meeting. So our Constitution, for the time being at least, is to remain unaltered. While it must be admitted that our Church Constitution lends itself to a liberal interpretation it must also be admitted that the phrasing is rather ambiguous and not so definite and clear-cut as some of our broader church members would like to see it. Ambiguity in statements of belief is the very thing that we, as a Church, must set our faces against. Granted that no constitution can fully state our religious faith (if it could the faith would be hardly worth having) we should at least be careful to see that, at no point, is our faith mis-stated. This matter is extremely important to a church which seeks to worship God in spirit **and in truth.**

Evangelical Inaccuracies.

The Y.M.C.A. Hall, Belfast, seems lately, not only to have closed its doors against religious veracity, but to have put up the shutters to keep out all new light and truth that is breaking forth from God's Word. A few weeks ago Dr. E. J. Pace lecturing on the Bible said that " not only does the Bible *explicitly* (the italics are ours) reveal the Trinity, but saturating its literary structure are innumerable trinities-in-unities," To call this an inaccurate statement is to use very mild language. The plain unvarnished truth is that nowhere in the whole Bible, with the exception of an admittedly spurious passage, is the doctrine of the Trinity explicitly set forth.

The Rev. John M'Neill lecturing in the same Hall, on Monday, November 26th, pandered to popular theological prejudice by saying that " Scientists will soon be forced to say there is a God." This is nothing short of a libel on a body of honest, upright and for the most part, God-fearing men. Whatever charges may be brought against nineteenth century scientists it must be admitted that present-day scientists may claim to be high priests of religion pure and undefiled.

And we have heard it said that Liberal Christianity has nothing to offer Ulster. If it has not, so much the worse for Ulster.

THE EDITOR WISHES ALL READERS A MERRY CHRISTMAS.
THE WISH IS OLD BUT THE SENITMENTS ARE FRESH.

Church and Theology in Northern Ireland.

I.

Our Province has become noted for its exports of ships, linen, and an occasional outstanding personality in various fields of action and creative activity. It is a pity, though it is not surprising in view of conditions, that the sons of Ireland have to migrate to a larger stage, and an intellectually more virile and cosmopolitan environment to develop their genius or gifts to the full. Bernard Shaw has said that he was born in Ireland, but being a sensible man, he left it at the age of nineteen. The result of this export of brains, combined with the backward state of general education is that Ulster itself is held in the grip of sentimental conservatism and custom and suffers from the resistance and depression of mass standards in the things of the mind and soul.

II.—The Church Stagnant.

This general condition manifests itself in the sphere of the Church and religion. Even Non-Subscribing Presbyterianism, the section of the Church traditionally most free to respond to the movements of thought in the age, lags behind and has a prejudice against new ideas. So far as theology is concerned it prefers on the whole to ca' canny and keep step with the weaker brethren, who in spite of their weakness manage to lord it over the inheritance, in accord with the Biblical dictum " their strength is made perfect in weakness." What **they** cannot digest in the way of

truth and fact must be kept out of the theological menu, and the Church has to be fed on milk for babes and sucklings.

It can scarcely be denied that while elsewhere theology has made notable advances in the last 50 years, and become more civilised, more humane, more ethical and spiritual in its conceptions, the Irish Churches have made no contribution to that advance. Their professors and teachers are without mark in the wider theological community of Britain and Europe, their scholars have cut no ice, they have made no contribution to the pioneering work which has been accomplished in the fields of Biblical and theological thought and literature.

III.—The Power of the Weak.

What is the reason of this sterility and lack of creative power? Undoubtedly a main cause is that college and pulpit alike are intellectually suffocated by the unintelligent and uninformed inertia and prejudice in the pews. A religious community gets the sort of colleges and pulpits it makes and deserves. If its membership, claiming to possess final infallible truth already, and sunk in the mental indolence and stagnation such a claim is bound to encourage, is dead set against theological change and progress, then its ministers become subjected to an almost irresistible temptation to succumb to the slatus quo, and to adapt themselves to an environment hostile to thought. "Ephraim is wedded to his idols, let him alone." "Give the public what it wants." "It is hard to kick against the pricks." So democracy reigns in the Church and it is an uncultured and uninstructed democracy so far as theological scholarship is concerned. It is still determined that the sun shall revolve round its little earth.

"The Church has a fatal skill in encystlng prophets whom it does not cast out, against the contagion of their spirit and the spread of their fires. The ecclesiastical order still slays its prophets, or, a not less effectual disposal, buries them alive in its organism."

IV.—The Minister Errant.

Far too many church members hold the doctrine that they pay the minister not to read and study and give them the best that has been thought and said in the world about religion and reality, and the eternal questions, but to hang about their doorsteps and sit at their fireside thinking and saying nothing of any consequence to anybody. Congregations consider the minister's feet more valuable to them than his mind. No wonder that in the movement of religious revelation in this modern age, Ireland counts for nothing and has nothing to say, that anybody outside regards as worth mentioning. Irish Protestantism to-day has no names in the theological or devotiona l literature. It is a back number. And it will remain so till the bulk of church people change their sense of values and demand something better. They get peace but it is only another name for slavery of mind.

V.—The Pew Dominant.

This is being felt also among leaders of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. The first Moderator of the Reunited Church declared in Assembly on the great occasion of the Union that "One of the great problems of the Church is the middle-aged manhood and womanhood of the pew, and how to help them to retain their touch with the progressive forces of life. The great mass of our membership remains satisfied with the very elementary religious knowledge acquired in school and in class. They are not deeply concerned with the fundamental intellectual and moral problems of the modern world. **We must learn to rethink the teaching of our Christian faith.** So long as surrender of intellect prevails there will be an indolence of spirit and a reluctance to undertake any fresh adventures of faith. **The priesthood of knowledge, the priesthood of the intellect cannot be dissociated from the priesthood of believers."**

That is a cry from the man occupying the most honoured seat of leadership in the Presbyterian Church to-day, and it betokens the deeply felt sense that it is the laity who are the drag on the wheels of truth and are stifling the pulpit. They don't read; their theology is out of date and antiquated, but they will have no other. Ignorance is the dictator and controls the thinking of the Church. Its mind is tied to the apron-strings of the unintelligent and uninstructed, who have the whip-hand.

VI.—The Battle of Freedom.

In this vital matter of its theology, the pulpit in the North of Ireland will have to

fight the battle of freedom, as it has been fought and won in all the other sciences. It may cause a deal of disturbance, much unsettlement and pain, some loss perhaps, but these things have to be gone through, and have been gone through, in every realm of life where modern discovery and new knowledge have compelled progress and the adoption of fresh systems and methods. The travail of dislocation and perplexity has been the inevitable price of civilised advance. In the realm of religion it cannot be otherwise. The cross must precede the resurrection, but very few can face their calvary. The alternative however, is the death of the spirit, the reign of darkness, the end of that adventure which is God in us, the Divine Life stirring in the soul of the race or in its creative spirits. The ideal of sound democracy is to obtain the rule of the wisest; in theology we have the rule of the barbarians.

Mother and Child.

By Ullin.

We know there are those in the world who hate Christianity, bitterly, and who if they had it in their power would wipe it out completely. We know how this has been attempted in Russia, and although the attempt has been a desperate one, and is still being continued, yet it has not succeeded. Supposing however such an attempt did succeed, that under the leadership and scheming of those who were lords of hate, even a temporary victory in the outer world were gained, and every vestige of Christianity, every scripture and every church were destroyed and public worship rendered impossible, yet the great fundamentals would remain, for they are the fundamentals of life.

Some of us who have come to believe that with the thread of history, the threads also of myth and mysticism have been interwoven, may perhaps see a richer beauty and meaning in some of the ancient forms of the Christian Church, than the ordinary worshipper would understand; how cosmic facts expressed in myth, such as the enfolding of the Divine Life in dense matter and its liberation, as we have in a passage of how Christ—"In that He descended into the lower parts of the earth, He is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things,"—involution and evolution. Matter becomes the Virgin and so on. On the mystical side, where the Christ is born in us, a whole scheme is built on that. If Matthew and Luke had been lost, as we are told the original Matthew has been, or if they had never been written, and we had had only Mark and John, to go upon—well, would we have had Christmas? There were those who believed that Jesus became Christ at his baptism, and celebrated the baptism on Christmas day.

Howsoever Christ took to Himself a true body and a reasonable soul, enough that it was at least true and reasonable and that "the Life was made manifest.i'

Supposing however all that is commonly known as Christianity was brought to the scrap heap, as some of it already has been, witness the statement "Unitarians do not worship the Virgin Mary." Neither do Roman Catholics. We do not worship "His Worship the Lord Mayor," or their worships the magistrates. Worship means worth-ship and we acknowledge by suitable respect their "worth," their service to the community. The worship accorded to the Virgin Mary is not that accorded to Almighty God, whose worship is termed "latria" and that if "addressed to a creature would become idolatry," "Dulia" or "Douleia" is the reverence paid to distinguished servants of God. "As the Blessed Virgin has a separate and supereminent rank among the saints the worship paid to her is 'hyperdulia.'"

Well, the next best thing to honouring a man is to honour his mother, because a good man owes a great deal to a good mother, and if we do not worship Mary in the same way that we worship God, yet Theodore Parker acknowledged the Mother-aspect of God as well as His Fatherhood, and prayed to God as Father-Mother. If he had added the Son, he would have been back to the old Egyptian Trinity. But in any case in reverencing Motherhood, we are holding to the germ of truth, which no revolution could destroy, even if, as at the Protestant Reformation the images of the Virgin were hurled to the dust. The destruction of outer forms only drives us back to reality, and whenever we see the Mother and the Child we have the manifestation of God which is the heart of the Christian festival. The world needs reminding of the sacredness of Motherhood. Changing times have brought with them

forgetfulness of this vital truth. Motherhood is as it were a sacred shrine, which may only be approached with greatest purity of mind and feeling. Ever on the altars of our hearts let there be the light of perpetual adoration, and thus may Motherhood be accompanied with chivalry and honour, and the little child be received as one whose angel beholds the face of our Father in Heaven.

Oxford's Latest Benefactor.

The official notice of a bequest to the University of Oxford by the late Mr. Walter Gordon was the first intimation that a good many Oxford residents had of Mr. Gordon's death. The purpose of the bequest is to provide a fund for granting aid to poor students—whether junior or senior—towards medical and nursing expenses when sick. Mr. Walter Gordon was a recluse who was personally almost unknown to the present generation. He was generally regarded as an eccentric. He was a well-known figure in the streets—as he strode along hatless, with long hair and knickerbockers. For many years he was a hard-working and very successful tutor to the non-collegiate students delegacy. Many of the earlier Mansfield men regarded him as an ideal lecturer in logic. He was a man of very warm human sympathy, and had a profound interest in religion, although he would probably have described himself as an agnostic. His father, Rev. John Gordon, was a well-known Unitarian minister, and his surviving brother is Rev. Alexander Gordon, of Belfast, formerly principal of the Unitarian Home Mission College, Manchester.—"The Christian World, October 31st, 1929")

Subsidy Fund.

The Treasurer begs to acknowledge with thanks, the receipt of £1 Annual Donation from Mrs. Eustace Thompson, Cairncastle. Further donations are earnestly requested.

First Church, Belfast,

The First Presbyterian Church Branch of the Women's League are holding a Sale of Work at the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, on Wednesday, December 4th, to be opened by Miss Davidson, of Bryansford, at 3 o'clock.

The objects of the Sale are to raise £80 for the recent renovation of the Church organ, and a sum in addition to that to be divided between certain hospitals and the Belfast Domestic Mission. At least £100 nett is required.

Mrs. Nicol Cross, President of the Branch, has been organising the work and there will be various stalls with many kinds of useful and decorative articles, from domestic necessities to objects of art. Teas and High Teas may be had during the evening till 9 p.m., and all friends are cordially invited.

Letters to the Editor.

[Letters to the Editor are welcomed. They should be written in good taste, as brief as possible and duly authenticated. No letter will be inserted without the writer's name].

SIR,

With reference to the Anglican Church and the State, mentioned in your editorial of November, Lloyd George informed the House of Commons, that the doctrine of Purgatory was lost by the casting-vote of the Speaker. What a pity they didn't relieve us of Hell instead of Purgatory.

Yours etc., JOHN BARRON.

SIR,

Please allow me to make the following requests in your columns.

1. If anyone knows the present whereabouts of the photo-block of the Crumlin Church, will he please communicate with me.

2. I should be glad to have a few copies, if any are left, of the Photo-Calendar of our Churches produced in 1925. I have the one containing Crumlin, it is the other that is needed.

3. If anyone has any relics, manuscripts, or anything of historical interest to us at Crumlin, we should be glad to be offered them in view of our approaching centenary in 1935. Old recollections will be useful too.

Yours, etc., G. PRICE-JONES.

N.B.—Editorial Communications should be sent to the Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, 19 Wellington Park Avenue, Belfast.

Phone—Malone 378.

Contributions must be in the Editor's hands not later than the 20th of the month.

The Modern Conception of God.

By Rev. Alfred Hall, M.A., B.D.
(Of Sheffield.)

[Address delivered in Ulster Hall, at the United Service, November 17th, 1929.]

Nothing can be more distressing than to try to define the Infinite, to limit the illimitable or to compress into syllables the highest and deepest experiences of our souls. That is why all conceptions of God are sure to be inadequate. To attempt to define God is also beset with dangers. We should not to-day take a piece of wood, shape and carve and beautify it and fall down to it and say, "Deliver me, for thou art my god." But idolatry is possible, as Carlyle pointed out, apart from every external symbol. We can be guilty of it in "the chambers of our imagery." We perhaps form a mental vision of God as in the fashion of a man, or, remembering that He is Spirit, we form an inage—we can call it nothing else—of an abstract being, endowed with human qualities in their perfection. Then we say of that figment of our imaginations, "That is God: in that we can believe, and that we can and do worship." Is it not plain that this image may after all be nothing more than a glorification of ourselves, a deification of our own personal ideal? At best it is a notional form of our poor minds, a merely relative thing which we suppose to be the Absolute.

Symbols and Their Danger.

We are bound to use symbols of this nature to bring before our own minds the Being of God. The danger comes in when we **fix the image.** Once our conception of God is fixed, we look abroad and discover that we cannot find our image in the world about us. We are cast down. We have our doubts, our scepticisms, our despairs. We suppose that we are agnostics, and say to our friends, "You would be shocked, if you knew the extent of my unbelief." We cease to worship or to pray. Why? All because we cannot find our poor image of God, which may be self-created or traditionally received, in the universe about us. What are we doing, when we act in this way? We are using the deepest life of our souls, on which our faith should rest, to destroy our faith. Because our inmost being longs for something higher than our conception of God, we suppose we are unbelievers, whereas we have only dashed our self-made image to the ground and broken it to pieces. The half God has gone, because God has arrived. Our loftier ideals have driven him away and we have not sought the God who inspired those ideals. That is the tragedy of many a wrecked soul to-day. Modern scepticism is often due to this failure to search for God afresh in the larger experience of mind and spirit.

Or perhaps we take another way, a way which is urged by Mr. H. G. Wells. Again, we refuse to surrender our idol, and we say, "We cannot find our God in the world, but He exists. He is having a hard, lonely fight against the world as we know it. The Invisible King is striving against the visible evil of the universe, and we must help him in the struggle. He is calling and all noble souls must respond." Be it confessed, there are inspiration and encouragement in such a faith. But if we accept it, we surrender our belief in the unity of the universe and of God. We deny His supremacy. We keep our image fixed, and we purchase our faith at the expense this time of throwing over the universe. If we are inclined to do that, it will be well to remember the famous words of Edward Caird, that, "A man's religion is the expression of his ultimate attitude to the universe, the summed-up meaning and purport of his whole consciousness of things."

Changed Conceptions of God.

Our conceptions of God have been changed through scientific discovery. We must needs think to-day of God as being more majestic than ancient thinkers could conceive Him. But sometimes scientists appear to speak in a negative way. For instance, one view is that the universe is a purely material process, and all things are moving in purposeless cycles, without any goal and without any aim. Out of the fiery masses we term "nebulae" suns develop and pursue their courses throughout millions of years, only to become blind suns which meet and clash, as they course through space to become nebulae again. It is a gloomy picture, but some people regard it as the summing up of reality. It makes its appeal for support to physical science and especially to astronomy.

But it is by no means certain that we should limit ourselves to the sciences in our search for Reality. As Dr. Martineau pointed out, the study of nebulae, or of the

strata of the earth or even of physiology will never explain the genius of Hamlet or the inspiration of the Sermon on the Mount, or the agony in Gethsemane. Years ago John Fiske, a foremost American philospher and evolutionist, said "Of all the implications of the doctrine of evolution with regard to man, I believe the very deepest and strongest to be that of the Reality of Religion. And religion teaches nothing, if it does not make clear the purposiveness of God in nature and in human life."

The New Cosmogany.

Recently some of us have been impressed by the works of Sir J. H. Jeans, a great astronomer at whose feet we must sit in all humility, when he tells us about facts of the universe. He brings us a new Cosmogony, a new view of the universe, which must affect our conception of God. He states that the most remote objects visible in the biggest telescope on earth are so distant that light, travelling at the rate of 186,000 miles a second, takes 140 million years to reach us. We must surrender all little conceptions of God, no matter what theologians have advocated them, or how time-honoured they may be, in ~~fact~~ of the stupendous universe which is being revealed to us.

Coming to our solar system we are told that it is of the nature of "an astronomical freak." Millions of years ago our sun came into close proximity with another star which simply rent it asunder and the separated parts formed into the planets. "If a second star had not happened to come close to our sun, there would have been no solar system."

All this may seem alarming. In a universe so vast and thus formed, of what account can we men be? Are we not less than a group of creatures of whose existence we become conscious only when we look through a very powerful microscope? Judged by size only that might be a logical and legitimate conclusion. But there are facts we must put on the other side, when we consider spiritual beings, whether God or ourselves in relation to the universe.

Five Fundamentals.

1. There is the astounding fact that we are aware of all this wonder of the universe The new view of the universe is certain to give us a new view of the spirit of man. Already we must say, marvellous is the universe in its vastness, but still more marvellous is the mind of man which comprehends it.

2. Then, we must not read too much into the phrase, "astronomical freak." Life could never have appeared on this planet, unless the potentiality of life had been stored in the universe all the time. It is a matter for constant wonder that out of the fiery rolling mass of millions of years ago, so apparently formless and alien to life, there gradually evolved the delicate wing of the insect, the colour of the flower, and the brain of man. A reasonable being, such as man is, could never have come into existence, unless reason had been in the universe somewhere. We can go so far as to say, with another famous scientist, Professor J. A. Thomson, "In the beginning was mind and that same mind is the light of men."

3. It is an excellent practice, when we have been absorbed in one thing, to turn to its opposite. The sense of wonder is awakened by things vast and by things small. When we look through a telescope, the heavens may appear merciless and suns and planets may seem to be rolling on a pitiless way. But when we gaze through a microscope and perceive the marvellous adaptation of tiny organisms to their environment and the inner and outer relations of little specks of life which float in water, we are astounded at the way in which purpose extends down to the minutest atom and thrills through it. And we ask, "Can there be so much purpose in the parts and none in the whole?" Religion answers: if the telescope reveals that mighty worlds are moving in purposeless cycles, a statement which cannot indeed be proved, then the microscope is a better index than the telescope, the life of man a better key to the purposiveness of God than an insentient universe.

4. We can never be too grateful to Jesus for what He did for us in this connection. He did not appeal to the overpowering Majesty of the Universe and of God in order to awaken men's faith in divine things. He dwelt on the wonder of things small, on God's marvellous care for things overlooked and despised, on the way in which He watched the sparrow fall and on the glory with which He clothed a wayside flower. The God of the mountain and the storm of the sky and the cloud gave place in His teaching to the Father who cared for all, who had a purpose in every life and had

poured His choicest gifts into the spirit of man. He pointed to the quality of the human soul rather than to the bigness of the universe. He made known that it is possible for man to have intimate personal communion with the Divine.

5. Our scientists become more intelligent as they learn more of the universe, because behind the whole is intelligence of mind, which we term God. The universe is full of symbols, which are expressive of mind at the back of all things.

God is therefore, the Transcendent Intelligence, who created us and sustains us, the "Tremendous Mystery," the something "totally other" than ourselves, who is worthy of all adoration and worship and praise. The world tells forth His power. The atom speaks of Him as well as the saint. That is why Lord Moynihan recently said that some men of science are aware of a Deity in certain ways more immense and more august than the one too familiar to many too well meaning people.

The Light of the World.

All definitions of God are certain to be faulty. The best are those, marked by freedom and breadth, which suggest more than they state and into which we can read the deepest life of the spirit. We can speak of God as Love, as Light, as Life, and as our Father, because we cannot comprehend the greatness of such qualities as love and fatherhood.

God is the underlying Reality of all things. Because He is Light in us, we are aware of shadows in the world. Because He is Truth in us, we are conscious of error. If we feel a Higher than ourselves moving in our inner life or an ideal which belittles our achievement, we may know that it is God. Or if we perceive wisdom and power in the unfolding of the marvels of the world, we may know that it is God. And when our souls are cast down and disquieted within us, and we are overcome with a sense of loneliness, it is not because God is not there but because He is there, calling us away from our self-made idols, from our limited conceptions to a deeper apprehension of His Divine Reality.

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Sir Henry Jones, Glasgow

By Rev. J. Glynne Davies.
(Moderator of the Irish Non-Subscribing Church.)

The life-story of a great man is one of the most helpful and interesting studies any of us can pursue. Sir Henry Jones was in truth a great man and a noble soul. The record of his career is a real inspiration: in him we find a personality, not only of rare mental and spiritual power, but also a character of singular beauty and of human tenderness. His life reveals the wonderful possibilities of a soul which is set upon a lofty ideal, and is inspired by a passionate desire to serve mankind to the utmost of its powers.

I am well aware that his early struggles against adverse circumstances to secure an educational training to fit him for the great aim he had set before himself, can be paralleled in many another life, which has reached, perhaps, far greater material success and renown—but in the realms of sure knowledge and moral and spiritual power, few, I believe, have reached greater eminence than Sir H. Jones.

He was born in 1852 in a small Denbighshire village, where his father toiled as a shoemaker. Both his parents had the refinement of nature which is often found among the best of a peasant people, when the pressing home duties and responsibilities of family life have been sanctified and ennobled by a profoundly religious habit of thought.

Early Life.

At the age of four and a half years he was sent to the village school, where, apart from reading and counting, little was taught. At the age of twelve, he left school to learn his father's trade. Soon he was proficient enough in the work to accompany his father on his shoe-mending journeys to the neighbouring farms.

The home was a small cottage, and it required all a good mother's skill to feed and clothe her family on an average income of about £1 a week.

In his exquisite little volume of autobiography, entitled "Old Memories," he tells in language of mingled humour and pathos, how the family clothing was "made down," from the elder to the younger children. Henry himself was over sixteen when he first experienced the joy of possessing a new jacket. When at the age of eighteen, he went to Bangor Training College to sit for the entrance examination, he wore a suit borrowed from his elder brother.

Of material aid, father and mother had little to give—but of moral and spiritual power and understanding, they gave to their children in large measure. His mother was endowed with a wonderful intuition and imagination—stressing spiritual issues rather than material yearning after perfection—dedicating the soul to the "things beyond."

The characteristics of the father were honesty, simplicity, industry, truthfulness, fidelity, an abounding neighbourliness—"a slack job never passed through his hands." "He had more of the appearance of an artist coming from his studio than of a shoe-maker coming from his bench."

Such were the home and parentage by which his life was shaped amid the beauty and ruggedness of the Welsh hills.

Spiritual Responsiveness.

Spiritual activity was natural and constant in Sir Henry. Hetherington, his biographer, tells us that, true to the character of his race, his nature was extraordinarily responsive to the impact of sight and sound. He would stand motionless and entranced at the sound of the wind in the trees, and he could be moved almost to tears by the beauty of a landscape as he walked amid the hills of Argyllshire or in North Wales.

Natural beauty stirred him greatly, and in later life he maintained that that in itself was proof of the presence and loving-kindness of God.

It seemed to him so much of a gift of grace, so unnecessary in a merely mechanical world—that its abundant ministry showed that our world is not mechanical, but the work of the limitless benevolence of a munificent will. The main influence on the heads of this little Welsh household, and through them, and their children, was religion.

For many generations the Sunday School has been an educational centre of first-rate importance in Welsh life, and Jones, when he had reached the height of his ambition in Glasgow, recalled with gratitude, how the Bible and other things were opened up by the expositions of Robert Hughes, a neighbouring farmer—"One of the best teachers I ever had," he once remarked.

Revolt from Calvinism.

He was brought up in the Calvinistic Methodist Church, and no doubt seems to have entered his young mind regarding the truth of some of the main dogmas of that church, such as predestination. The division of men into "elect" and "non-elect"—the blessedness of some souls and the destruction of others. It was not until he was introduced to the teaching of Edward Caird, that his religious faith underwent serious changes. Under this new and powerful influence he soon began to feel that the narrowness of his religious faith brought a narrowness of world—that the limitation of salvation had implied the restriction of God's beneficient power, and had shut off the soul from the free enjoyment of all the splendour that is offered to man in the natural and spiritual worlds. The Universality of God's care for men and the Omnipresence of God in nature and in human life were so central and dominant in his own thought and experience, that a faith which left anything outside God, which set any limits to His beneficence and power, seemed thereby to obscure the significance of man's experience and to restrict the range of his intercourse with God. Religion meant "liberation"—"at-one-ment," as he was fond of saying—the discovery by the soul of the infinite friendliness of the world.

A creed by which salvation was made something special and miraculous—which denied to the **natural** order a place in the healing of souls, caused men to miss **just that which was easy of access,** and most inspiring in life, and which made its little things and deeds of greater account. Life lost its spring and joyousness—and Jones never found it easy to be patient with a view which diminished man's hold upon, and stake in, the ordinary course of the world's providence. He maintained that every form of human experience could become witness to God's presence in man and that the ways of approach to God were as many and as open as the mansions prepared for those that love Him.

Henry's boyhood ambition was to become an efficient shoe-maker and a deacon in the local Methodist church. Later he decided to enter the ministry of his church and preached with much acceptance for some years, but was never in a settled pastorate.

A Famous Saying.

In the course of time he was accused of cherishing heretical opinions and invitations to preach became fewer. Professor Morris Jones, the famous Oriental scholar, and a warm friend, told him one day, that he, Henry, was charged in some circles with denying the divinity of Jesus Christ, "I," said Henry, "I deny the divinity of Christ—I do not deny the divinity of **any** man!"

In the year 1875 he learnt that there was to be a competition for a Dr. William's Scholarship of £40 a year for three years tenable at the University of Glasgow, and open to English and Welsh Nonconformist students. He resolved to enter for it. He won the scholarship and proceeded to Glasgow, where he spent the next seven years—three as an undergraduate and four as a fellow and assistant to Professor Edward Caird. Caird's teaching caught the young man in its power.

In Glasgow he won a Scholarship to the value of £225 a year for four years. Hitherto he had had to borrow money for his maintenance at Glasgow—this scholarship relieved the financial strain. "Do you know, he told a friend, "how I celebrated the event? I went and bought a herring for my tea." He still desired to enter the Methodist ministry. When he married in 1881 he had no settled prospects, but he buoyed up his spirirs with the thought that he would be able to serve his fellows in some useful way even if he failed to realise his fondest hope. "If I can't get a chair of philosophy," he declared "I can preach. If I can't preach, I can teach! And if they won't give me a school, I can make a pair of shoes with anyone in Glasgow." But such a man, endowed with brilliant gifts blended with a beautiful character could not be denied.

Ambition Achieved.

His great hour arrived. In year 1893 Edward Caird accepted the mastership of Balliol College, Oxford, and Jones was elected to succeed his master in the Moral Philosophy Chair at his old University. It was the one office he would have coveted for himself. "I do not expect to fill Caird's place," he wrote—"If I can only fill my own place and put my heart's blood into my work for the young men, I shall be happy."

It was a wonderful achievement for a young man, who in his early years worked during the daytime at the shoemaker's bench and toiled during the night hours, mostly unaided, to fill his mind with knowledge to fit him for a larger sphere in the service of his generation. His labours in Glasgow were crowned with success and he

found abounding happiness in his work and in his own home-circle.

In the year 1913 he was attacked by an uncurable malady. He underwent a serious operation and to the joy of his friends and to his own heartfelt delight, he made a wonderful recovery which enabled him to take up his work at the University once more.

Irreparable Loss.

The Great War came—he was called upon to perform prodigious tasks up and down the country, lecturing to the troops at home and abroad. He visited America and addressing large audiences there on behalf of the Allied cause.

News came that one of his sons was reported missing on the field of battle. They awaited tidings of him—but in vain. "The weeks," he wrote to a friend, "I am carrying on by escaping—plunging from one thing to another—and very grateful that I have work of a more or less imperative character. Do you remember the old fisherman in the "Antiquary" trying to mend his boat **after** his boy was drowned? I know that feeling too," "But God's universe is very wide, and His benevolence reaches from pole to pole—so we are keeping pretty steady. Even the flowers that die in the bud are bonnie and worth having, and fairer flowers than the lives of our laddies never grew. We are not repining. The boy was lent to a good cause, when his mother said 'we must let him follow the gleam.' The winds of time cannot put out that gleam, nor take the radiance from the boy's face."

Another son was reported missing, he had been captured by the Turks, and after many and dire ordeals, he was restored to them and in collaboration with a brother-officer, wrote that wonderful book, "The Road to Endor."

In the year 1921 the old malady returned and he was no longer able to continue his work. As he lay waiting for the end, having said "good-bye" to the affairs of the world, he summed up to a friend at his bed-side, his life's message—he wished to bring things "to a proper conclusion" he declared. "The ultimate meaning of Reality is Love. If that is true, there must be a soul, a personal God, to do the loving. The task of philosophy is to justify that view.

Religious Convictions.

His innate sense of humour remained with him to the last. A few hours before the end, his neice Mary, and the nurse, came to his room. He asked, "which of you is going to sit up with me to-night?" Mary, understanding his mood, answered, "Which of us would you like?" At once a gleam of the old mischief shone in his eye—"The prettier! Now fight for it!" That night, with the words "The Lord reigneth—Let the earth rejoice!" he passed peacefully from his terrible bondage of suffering.

He had travelled far on his spiritual pilgrimage—he had reached a realm infinitely broader than that in which he had been brought up. Writing to a minister to thank him for his kindly and comforting words at the grave of his youngest son, Eric, he speaks of Lady Jones and himself "We are pulling through wonderfully—None of the churches would have my creed nor my wife's—**but it stands the storm wonderfully.**"

I believe he was mistaken in saying that **none** of the churches would have his creed. I venture to say that his creed was very much akin to our own. He would have found peace of mind and heart within the fellowship of our churches. He might have said with Browning, whose interpreter he was—"God! Thou art Love! I build my Faith on that."

When most of us have brought down our religious faith to its simplest terms, I believe Browning's sublime words would give it fitting expression. Sir Henry Jones believed in a God of Eternal and Unchanging Love. He believed in man—in his endless possibilities for progress—he believed in his everlasting existence—"In another kingdom of a sweeter air."

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Obituary.

Mr. James Wisnom.

On Sunday, October 13th, after long sufiering, there was laid to rest the mortal remains of Mr. James Wisnom, who carried on very successfully extensive farming in the district of Cairnbrock. Mr. Wisnom was widely known and highly respected. Of a very humourous and genial disposition his ready wit made him an outstanding personage among his numerous friends. A life-long member of the old Presbyterian church, he regularly attended public worship, taking very great interest in the services. Our sympathy goes out to his widow and two young daughters who are left to mourn his loss.

Reports.

All Souls', Belfast.—On Wednesday, 18th December, at 8 p.m., in Rosemary Hall, the All Souls' Dramatic Society will present "Outward Bound,' a play in three acts by Sutton Vane. Though additional performances will be given elsewhere, there will be only one performance in Rosemary Hall, consequently early application for tickets is advised. Tickets may be had from the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Robert Frater, The Ingle, Finaghy Road North, the Depository, Rosemary Street, or from any member of the Society, price 2/4 and 1/3. A few of the 2/4 seats may be reserved in special circumstances if early application is made to the Hon. Secretary.

* *

Crumlin.—The Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Sunday and Monday evenings, October 13th and 14th. The minister preached on Sunday, and the Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A., of York Street, on Monday. The Church had been nicely decorated and the visits of local and Belfast people gave us great hope and encouragement.

Stanhope Street Mission and the Raloo Church paid the congregation the compliment of inviting the minister to conduct their Harvest Services on October 20th and 27th respectively. Not only so, but the minister and his wife were honoured at both places as the guests of the day, which they greatly enjoyed.

On October 25th, Mr. Price-Jones was officially welcomed at Leicester into the active ministry by the Council of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.

Communion Sunday, November 3rd, saw a good attendance at service.

On November 24th, an Evening Service was held, as well as the usual morning one, and there was a good attendance. We hope to continue these services monthly, the next being arranged for December 15th, at 7-15 p.m.

During the month, the congregation surprised and pleased the minister and his wife, by a deputation bearing their best wishes and hopes for their future. They also made Mr. and Mrs. Price-Jones the gift of a wallet of Bank Notes, to be invested on some article of their own choosing, as the Congregational Wedding Gift.

* *

Mountpottinger Branch, Unitarian Women Women's League.—On November 4th, we had an enjoyable talk from Mrs. Byrne, telling us of her holiday in the Rhineland. The people and places were so wonderfully described, we felt our Lecturer was living the holiday over again, and that we were with her. Mrs. Byrne related many instances of the great hospitality of the Germans to their visitors, also their industrious habits; since the war children go to school at 7-30 in the morning. The women are always busy and are most hygienic in their methods of house-keeping. Space does not permit of relating the many interesting and instructive things which Mrs. Byrne told us about the German commercial and domestic life. Mrs. Ewbank presided, and expressed the thanks of our members for the happy evening we had spent. There were 30 present.

* *

Raloo.—The Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held in the above Church on Sunday, October 27th, the pulpit being occupied by the Rev. G. Price-Jones, recently ordained minister at Crumlin, who just arrived from England with his wife on Sunday morning. He preached both morning and evening. In the evening there was a very large attendance, many people being obliged to stand. The harvest hymns were sung by the augmented choir in a most expressive manner, Miss W. Barry, the leader, presiding at the harmonium. The solos sung by Miss M. M'Gookin at each

service were highly appreciated, likewise the duet, " The Lord is My Shepherd," by Miss M. and E. M'Gookin. The Church decorations were carried out in an artistic manner.

* *

Warrenpoint.—A Harvest Thanksgiving Service was held on Sunday afternoon, October 20th, at 3-30 in the above church, and there was a satisfactory attendance, including visitors from Newry, Dromore and Belfast. The Church was tastefully decorated by a band of willing helpers. The praise service was led by an augmented choir, some friends from Newry taking part. A solo was sweetly rendered by Mrs. Morris, Newry, and an anthem, " Ye shall dwell in the Land," by Stainer, was impressively sung by the choir, the solo parts being taken by Miss Brady and Mr. Clarke, Newry. The harvest hymns were heartily sung by the congregation. The preacher was the Rev. G. J. Slipper, pastor loci, who based his address on the text " The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord," Psalm 33, part of 5th verse. The collection was on behalf of the Church funds and was generously responded to. The gifts of flowers, foliage, fruit, corn from friends are gratefully appreciated, as also the help of friends —some from other churches—who made the praise service so bright and enjoyable.

MARRIAGE.

MILLER—OSBORNE.—On November 20th, 1929 at the Renonstrant (Unitarian) Church, Comber, by the Rev. J. Glynne Davies, assisted by the Rev. Alex. Ashworth, Uncle of the bride, Thomas Allison, eldest son of John Miller and Mrs. Miller, Limavady, to Margaret Smyth, third daughter of Francis L. Osborne and Mrs. Osborne, " The Booten," near Comber, Co. Down.

Congregations of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

Belfast.—First Church, Rosemary Street, 11-30 and 7, Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A.
, All Souls', Elmwood Avenue, 11-30 and 7, Rev. Sydney P. Whitehouse.
,, Mountpottinger Unitarian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. J. H. Ewbank, B.A., B.D.
,, York Street Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A.

Dublin.—Unitarian Church, Stephen's Green, 12 and 7, Rev. E. Savell Hicks, M.A.
Antrim.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. George V. Crook.
Ballee.—11-45, Rev. Joseph H. Bibby.
Ballycarry.—Rev. William G. Marsden.
Ballyclare.—Rev. A. M. Bell, B.A.
Ballyhemlin.—Rev. John Barron.
Ballymoney.—The Remonstrant Meeting House, 12-15 p.m., Rev. Felix Holt, B.A.
Banbridge.—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 6-30 p.m., Rev. Percival Godding.
Cairncastle.—Old Meeting House. 12-15 p.m., Rev. Eustace Thompson.
Clough.—Supply.
Comber.—Rev. J. Glynne Davies.
Cork.—Rev. W. A. Weatherall.
Crumlin.—The Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. G. Price-Jones.
Downpatrick.—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m., Supply.
Dromore.—Rev. Alfred Davison.
Dunmurry.—Rev. John A. Kelly.
Glenarm.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. J. A. Miskimmin, B.A.
Greyabbey.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon (6 p.m. November to February), Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, M.A.
Holywood.—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Rev. Edgar Lockett.
Killinchy.—Rev. David J. Williams.
Larne.—Rev. James Kennedy, Rev. John Begg.
Moira.—Rev. Percival Godding.
Moneyrea.—Rev. J. Dare Davies.
Newry.—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 7 p.m. (October to May), Rev. G. J. Slipper.
Newtownards.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 3-30 p.m., Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, M.A.
Rademon.—Rev. John J. Magill, B.A.
Raloo.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. John M'Cleery.
Templepatrick.—Rev. Alfred Turner.
Warrenpoint.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church.—Services fortnightly, October to May, at 3-30 p.m.—Rev. G. J. Slipper.

Once again—for the fourth time—the Editor asks for full details from all Congregations.

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